

Community Development Commission

March 11, 1997

TO: Each Supervisor
Each Department Head

FROM: Carlos Jackson, Executive Director

SUBJECT: COUNTY OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

COUNTY OF L.A.
HUMAN SERVICES
EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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On March 4, 1997 the Board approved a motion and amendment authorizing me to take the necessary actions to implement a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration to create a County Office of Small Business Participation. The award letter required that a signed copy of the grant be returned to the funding agency within 15 days. I was unable to obtain a waiver to permit me to file a normal Board letter.

This memorandum, therefore, provides additional details. In making application for the grant, I was responding to Board action of April 30, 1996, instructing me, with other affected County departments, to work with the Los Angeles County Contracting and Purchasing Council to seek grant funds to create an Office of Small Business Participation and to develop a plan for operating the Office. The Council, which had the vision for this effort, was voluntarily formed in 1994 by County departments and commissions to improve procedures and outreach for purchase of County goods and services.

The primary purpose is to provide a one-stop center to assist small businesses in their efforts to contract with 35 County departments. This Office will also provide a coordinated outreach program to the County's business community, cities, chambers of commerce, and trade associations. This agency will contribute \$50,000 in space and supervisory costs as an In-Kind match.

Contracts over \$25,000 from all County departments, agencies, and commissions will be included on a central Web Page. These will include commodity procurement, service agreements and construction contracts. The Office will also provide technical assistance. Attached are brief summary sheets about the project.

This expanded outreach and increased competition should result in contract savings for County departments. I attach a recent article from Public Management focusing on use of electronic bulletin boards for purchasing. The State of Oregon, for example, saved 8% of the cost of purchased goods and services by this extended outreach. Comparable savings for Los Angeles County could

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

- A one stop office sponsored by the County of Los Angeles Community Development Commission to assist small to mid-sized businesses in their efforts to contract with 35 County departments, introduce new products to the County, and obtain technical assistance
- A resource for the County in providing a coordinated and uniform outreach program to its business community
- A single point of contact for the County's cities, chambers of commerce, and business organizations to obtain and share information concerning solicitations and economic development programs

BENEFITS TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- A one stop location which saves time and resources for small to mid-sized businesses in their efforts to contract with the County, which includes 35 separate departments
- Provides a mechanism to introduce new products or services to County deputy purchasing agents/contracting staff
- Technical assistance for first-time vendors and contractors
- A single point of contact to learn of sub-contracting and second tier opportunities with County prime contractors

PHASE I

- Hire staff and set-up office
- Establish Advisory Board
- Establish pilot program with corporate partners
- Develop of financial strategy for second year program
- Update and streamline County Vendor Guide and other outreach documents
- Establish speakers bureau and coordinate Countywide outreach events
- Establish mechanism to disseminate information to County staff
 - » Newsletter/Intranet